

AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS -- PROJECT DESCRIPTION

COLORADO: DENVER METRO GREENWAY SYSTEM

GREENSPACE, RIVERS, AND STREAMS

Rivers and streams have always been vital to the people of the Denver metropolitan area and the growth of the region and its economy. The city's waterways are irreplaceable recreational, wildlife, scenic and natural corridors that link the diverse communities in the metropolitan area with greenspace, and provide important benefits for families' quality of life. Citizens in the greater Denver metro area decided long-ago to build a world class network of regional connections and greenways, but there is more work to be done to complete this vision.

SUCCESS TO DATE BUILDING A DENVER METRO GREENWAY SYSTEM

As a result of decades of private, local, state and federal investment, large parcels of open land are protected and available for public use in and around the metropolitan area. Some of the Denver metro area's most important assets include:

- 40,000 acres of parks, open space and water quality/recreation improvements within the Denver metro greenway system
- Over 140 miles of trails serving about 2.9 million residents
- Large federal, state and local investment in the cleanups and restoration of Rock Flats and the Rocky Mountain Arsenal national wildlife refuges
- Private and public investment in the creation of Confluence and Commons Parks, major drivers of economic redevelopment in Denver's Lower Downtown. \$100 million invested in these environmental and recreational improvements has created an estimated more than \$10 billion of related economic benefits.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Local communities are leading the way with innovative conservation and outdoor recreation initiatives that build upon the natural amenities already protected in the Denver area. These initiatives involve a variety of tools, including land acquisition, environmental remediation, and building the new "green" infrastructure. A few of the key efforts and ideas to expand the Denver Metro Greenway System include:

- **Completing the Vision**
 - Five collaboratively based documents have been completed to further reclaim and enhance the South Platte River Greenway. "Shovel ready" projects are ready to become a reality.
- **Transforming Brownfields to Greenfields**
 - Denver is working to convert a recently-purchased industrial site into an 8-acre park on the South Platte River.
- **Water Quality and Riparian Habitat Improvements**
 - With a starting investment of \$27.4 M, and project partners aiming for a total investment of \$54 M, the Northeast Greenway Corridor project will restore, replace and acquire habitat around the Arsenal.
- **Enhancement of Recreation Experiences along Trails and Linking Open Spaces**
 - A collaboration of 25 public and private partners will implement 40 projects, including land conservation, tree canopy preservation, and new trail connections along the High Line Canal
 - Numerous public and private partners are working to extend new trails along the South Platte River, Sand Creek, and the Triple Greenway in Aurora
- **Connecting three national wildlife refuges in the Denver metropolitan area**
 - Federal, state and local entities are working in partnership to connect the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Rocky Flats and Two Ponds refuges through a continuous trail network. The trail link to Rocky Mountain Arsenal is planned for completion in summer, 2012 and funding is being sought to complete other links. A future goal of the project could be to expand this connection into a broader "Rocky Mountain Greenway" linking Rocky Mountain National Park to the refuges and the Denver metro area's trail system.
- **"Bread Basket" Agricultural Land Protection**
 - On the fringes of the metropolitan area, work is underway to conserve thousands of acres of working farms and ranches that supply food to the Denver metro population
- **Youth and conservation opportunities**
 - Hiring and educating young people throughout the region is a high priority in conservation efforts, as is connecting young people to the outdoor on trail projects, in open space, in parks and on rivers and streams.